DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 242 607 SO 015 508

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TITLE Nuclear Disarmament and the Insanity Defense: What Happened to Political Responsiveness?
PUB DATE 7 Apr 83
NOTE 27p.; Paper presented at the Meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association (Philadelphia, PA, April 7, 1983).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Beliefs; Controversial Issues (Course Content); *Disarmament; *Feminism; *Nuclear Warfare; *Political Issues; Social Science Research; World Problems

ABSTRACT

A study which explored the degree to which belief in a politically responsive/unresponsive world might be related to opinions concerning nuclear disarmament, the insanity defense, and women's rights is described. A total of 206 male and female undergraduates completed a 63-item questionnaire consisting of 46 Likert-format I-E items and 17 attitude items concerning nuclear disarmament, the insanity defense, and women's rights. The I-E items were factor analyzed and, in general, replicate Collins' (1974) four-factor structure of the I-E scale. Responses to the attitude items were compared to Collins' Belief in a Politically Responsive/Unresponsive World factor. Although several correlations obtained in the comparison suggested an interaction between the subscale and the attitude items, Collins' Belief in a Politically Responsive/Unresponsive World factor alone was unable to predict attitudes on nuclear disarmament or the insanity defense. (LP)

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Nuclear Disarmament and the Insanity Defense: What Happened To Political Responsiveness?

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Running head : DISARMAMENT AND THE INSANITY DEFENSE

Paper presented at the meeting of the
Eastern Psychological Association
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
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SP 015 508

Abstract

Two hundred and six male and female undergraduates completed a 63-item questionnaire consisting of 46 Likert format I-E items and seventeen attitude items concerning nuclear disarmament, the insanity defense, and women's rights. The I-E items were factor analyzed and, in general, replicate Collins' (1974) four-factor structure of the I-E scale. Responses to the attitude items were compared to Collins' (1974) Belief in a Politically Responsive/Unresponsive World factor. Although several correlations obtained in the comparison suggested an interaction between the subscale and the attitude items, Collins' (1974) Belief in a Politically Responsive/ Unresponsive World factor alone was unable to predict attitudes on nuclear disarmament or the insanity defense.

Nuclear Disarmament and the Insanity Defense:

What Happened To Political Responsiveness?

One of the implicit promises made by any measure of individual differences is that scores on the measure will be related to significant social attitudes and interpersonal behaviors. Among the popular individual difference measures, internal-external locus of control (Rotter, 1966) has had particular success in this regard. From the findings by Gurin, Gurin, Lao, & Beattie (1969) that internally-oriented black college students participated in civil rights activities to a greater extent than their externally-oriented counterparts, to more recent work showing psychic readers to be more internal than persons less interested in the paranormal (McGarry & Newberry, 1931), locus of control has been linked to a variety of social attitudes and issues (e.g. see reviews by Lefcourt, 1976; Phares, 1976). As Shaver & Ozer (1977) have noted, whatever locus of control may be, it does seem to be important.

Just what locus of control is, however, has not been quite so clear. Several factor-analytic studies have attempted, with mixed success, to identify the "true" factor structure of the original I-E scale. Both Mirels (1970), and Gurin, Gurin, and Morrison (1978) arrived at a two-factor structure for the scale, but those studies were limited by use of the Rotter (1966) forced-choice format. Other attempts to describe the factor structure of the scale (Collins, 1974; Kleiber, Veldman, & Menaker, 1973) have utilized a 46-item

Likert format, isolating factors that were inaccessible in the forced-choice format. Surprisingly, relatively few studies (Lau, 1982; Levenson, 1974; McGarry & Newberry, 1981) have focused on the ability of the multiple-factor structures to predict attitudes on social issues involving personal control over events. As a consequence, the present research was designed to assess the predictive value of a multiple-factor structure for attitudes on several significant social issues. Specifically, the study explored the degree to which Belief in a Politically Responsive/Unresponsive World (one of Collins', 1974, factors) might be related to opinions concerning nuclear disarmament, the insanity defense, and women's rights.

Method

Subjects

Subjects were 71 male and 138 female undergraduate students enrolled in an Introductory Psychology course at the College of William and Mary. All subjects received credit for their participation. One male and two female subjects failed to complete the questionnaire and were dropped from the analysis, leaving a total N of 206.

Procedure

The research was briefly described as a study of the "correlates of social attitudes" and each subject was asked to complete a Likert-type questionnaire consisting of the 46 I-E items (following Collins, 1974), and seventeen attitude items dealing with disarmament, the insanity defense, and women's rights. These attitude items were randomly interspersed with

the I-E items, producing a total of 63 statements. Because some of the items were to be used to select subjects for a companion study, subjects were provided a full explanation of the research at a later time. After completing the questionnaire, subjects were thanked for their participation and excused.

Results

The first task of the study was, of course, to demonstrate that the present factor structure corresponded to those already in the literature. For this comparison the questionnaires were scored (following Collins, 1974) so that strong agreement with an item resulted in a high (7) score. The I-E items and their identifying codes are shown in Table

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Insert Table 1 about here

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1. The 46 I-E items were factor analyzed using both the SAS (Helwig & Council, 1979) and BMDP (Dixon, 1975) statistical packages. In each case a principal components analysis (restricted to four factors) was performed, as was the appropriate varimax rotation. The two sets of analyses were virtually identical, so only the SAS factor structures will be described here.

The four factors extracted following rotation are shown in Table 2, and they correspond very closely to the factors obtained by Collins (1974). Four items (E2, E11, E16, & I16)

Insert Table 2 about here

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that were rejected in Collins' analysis for failure to load greater than ±0.35 loaded significantly higher in the present analysis so were included. The content of each of these items matched other items on the respective factors and inclusion of the items did not alter the character of the factors. Item E12, which loaded on two factors in the earlier analysis, here loaded uniquely on Factor 1, a result quite consistent with its content. Five items (E7, E9, I4, I7, & I9) that previously loaded greater than ±0.35 failed to do so here and were not included in the present set of factors. Finally, two items (E14 & E15) that loaded respectively on Factors 3 and 1 in Collins' study loaded greater than ±0.35 on different combinations of factors in the present research. In general, however, the four factors obtained here--Belief in a Difficult/Easy World, Belief in a Just/Unjust World, Belief in a Predictable/Unpredictable World, and Belief in a Politically Responsive/Unresponsive World--constitute an important replication of Collins' (1974) research.

The major objective of the present study was to examine the relationship between one of these factors, Belief in a Politically Responsive/Unresponsive World (political unresponsiveness factor), and attitudes on several contemporary social issues. The issues chosen for this study were ones for which the presumed responsiveness (or lack of

responsiveness) of the government might be critical. Nuclear disarmament, the insanity defense, and women's rights are all questions on which there is substantial disagreement between the opinions of "the people" as expressed in opinion polls and policies followed by relevant institutions of government.

As a precursor to the analysis, the seventeen attitude items (seven on nuclear disarmament, five on the insanity defense, and five on women's rights) were tested for internal consistency and discriminant validity. Internal consistency was measured using part-whole correlations and a separate factor analysis; discriminant validity was assessed by the average intercorrelations that an item from one attitude scale had with items from a different attitude issue. All of these item analyses were conducted separately for males and females, the resulting average intercorrelations were then pooled for the two sexes (there were no important differences between the sexes on the items finally selected). As a consequence of these item analysis procedures four of the nuclear disarmament items and four of the insanity defense items were retained. Unfortunately, none of the women's rights questions produced a satisfactory part-whole correlation (the criterion was $r > \pm 0.35$), so all of these questions were dropped from further analyses. The remaining nuclear disarmament items and insanity defense items, and their scoring keys, are shown in Table 3.

The ability of the political unreponsiveness factor to predict attitudes on nuclear disarmament and the insanity

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Insert Table 3 about here

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defense was assessed in two different ways. First, a factor analysis was conducted that included the 46 I-E items, the four nuclear disarmament items, and the four insanity defense attitude items. Factor loadings for the eight new items are presented in Table 4. The nuclear disarmament attitude items

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Insert Table 4 about here

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and the insanity defense attitude items clustered together on two separate factors. With the exception of item E19, no I-E item loaded greater than $\pm$0.24 on either of these new factors. Item E19 loaded -0.33 with the nuclear disarmament items. In addition, none of the new attitude items loaded greater than $\pm$0.27 on any of the four I-E subscales. The structure of the four I-E subscales was essentially unaltered by inclusion of the eight new items in the factor analysis.

Second, the correlations between scores on the political unresponsiveness factor and scores on the various items were examined directly. For this comparison all of the political unreponsiveness subscale items were rescored in such a way that higher scores represented stronger beliefs in the political unresponsiveness of the system. The disarmament items were scored so that higher scores represented greater

favorability toward disarmament, and the insanity defense items were scored so that higher scores represented greater support for continuation of the defense. The resulting intercorrelations are presented in Table 5. The low (though

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Insert Table 5 about here

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significant) intrascale correlations suggest that each major social attitude was, itself, multidimensional. Consequently, the resulting failure of the political unresponsiveness factor to predict either of the social attitudes is not totally surprising. But the scale was little more effective in predicting any single attitude response. For example, if subjects are split at the midpoint on the political unresponsiveness subscale, the largest difference among the disarmament items occurs on item ND4. For the following analyses, subjects who scored exactly at the midpoint on the political unresponsiveness subscale were not included. On item ND4 those who saw the world as politically responsive claimed that there has not yet been enough concerted effort made to remove nuclear weapons ($\underline{M}$=4.37), while those who believed the world to be politically unresponsive were less confident that concerted effort would accomplish the goal ($\underline{M}$=3.78). The difference between the two groups was significant, $\underline{t}(196) = 2.13$, $\underline{p} < .05$, although a test of the strength of association between the two groups suggested that

this statistical significance was, in fact, trivial. A point-biserial correlation analysis indicated that the political unresponsiveness subscale accounted for only 2.3% of the variance in item ND4, r =.152. Similarly, the midpoint split on the political unresponsiveness subscale made the greatest difference among the insanity defense items on item ID2. On this item, those who saw the world as politically unresponsive felt that the insanity defense was simply another legal loophole that allowed guilty criminals to go free (M=2.20), while those who believed the world to be politically responsive were less inclined to accept this explanation of the defense (M=2.73). Once again, the difference between the groups was significant, $t(196) = 2.27$, $p < .05$, but trivial, with the political unresponsiveness subscale accounting for only 2.6% of the variance on this item, r =.161.

Discussion

In any correlational analysis there are a number of possible reasons for a failure to reject the null hypothesis, including both conceptual and statistical problems. On the other hand, taking a cue from social judgment theories of attitude change (e.g. Eiser & Stroebe, 1972; Sherif & Hovland, 1961), there is the intriguing possibility that one's very position on an important social attitude may alter the extent to which an individual difference variable such as Belief in a Politically Responsive/Unresponsive World will predict one's view on that social attitude.

Just this sort of possibility is illustrated in Table 6.

Insert Table 6 about here

First, the respondents were divided at the midpoint on the political unresponsiveness factor, then, within each of these categories, subjects who were above the midpoint on "We need to have a strong nuclear arsenal to insure our own security against other countries who possess nuclear weapons" (ND1) were distinguished from subjects who were below the midpoint on that question. Within each of these four cells the scores on the political unresponsiveness factor were intercorrelated with responses on the attitude question. As the Table shows, within the group of subjects who agreed with the item and saw the world as politically unresponsive, the stronger the subject's belief in the unresponsiveness of the system the less strongly he/she agreed with the statement, $r(25) = .51$, $p < .01$. By contrast, among those who agreed with the item but saw the world as politically responsive, as a belief in the political responsiveness of the system increased so did the strength of agreement with the statement, $r(56) = .26$, $p < .05$. Other differential correlations were obtained on the remaining nuclear disarmament items and some of the insanity defense items as well, suggesting an interaction between the individual difference variable of locus of control and the individual's position on the attitude items. How are beliefs in a politically responsive world related to social attitudes? At least when the issue is disarmament or insanity, the answer

appears to depend on a person's initial attitude. What is clear is that the Belief in a Politically Responsive or Unresponsive World does not, by itself, correlate with attitudes on these questions. Multi-factor analyses of the I-E scale may be more adequate representations of an individual difference variable than the original "unidimensional" scale, but even this additional complexity may be insufficient to account for attitudes on involved issues of considerable social importance.

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Table 1

Content of Rotter's (1966) Original Internal-External Locus of Control Items Adapted to Likert format

CODE	CONTENT
E1	Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.
I1	People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.
E2	There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them.
I2	One of the major reasons why we have wars is because people don't take enough interest in politics.
E3	Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries.
I3	In the long run people get the respect they deserve in this world.
E4	Most students don't realize the extent to which their grades are influenced by accidental happenings.
I4	The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense.
E5	Without the right breaks one cannot be an effective leader.
I5	Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.
E6	No matter how hard you try, some people just don't like you.
I6	People who can't get others to like them don't understand how to get along with others.

Table 1 (Cont'd)

CODE	CONTENT
E7	I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.
I7	Trusting in fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action.
E8	Many times exam questions tend to be so unrelated to course work that studying is really useless.
I8	In the case of the well-prepared student there is rarely if ever such a thing as an unfair test.
E9	Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.
I9	Becoming a success is a matter of hard work; luck has little or nothing to do with it.
E10	This world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.
I10	The average citizen can have an influence in government decisions.
E11	It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyhow.
I11	When I make plans, I am almost certain I can make them work.
E12	Many times we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.

Table 1 (Cont'd)

CODE	CONTENT
I12	In my case getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.
E13	Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.
I13	Getting people to do the right thing depends upon ability; luck has little or nothing to do with it.
E14	As far as world affairs are concerned, most of us are the victims of forces we can neither understand nor control.
I14	By taking an active part in political and social affairs the people can control world events.
E15	Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.
I15	There is really no such thing as "luck".
E16	It is hard to know whether or not a person really likes you.
I16	How many friends you have depends on how nice you are.
E17	In the long run, the bad things that happen are balanced by the good ones.
I17	Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.
E18	It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office.
I18	With enough effort we can wipe out political corruption.

Table 1 (Cont'd)

CODE	CONTENT
E19	Sometimes I can't understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give.
I19	There is a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get.
E20	Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.
I20	It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.
E21	There's not much use in trying too hard to please people; if they like you, they like you.
I21	People are lonely because they don't try to be friendly.
E22	Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.
I22	What happens to me is my own doing.
E23	Most of the time I can't understand why politicians behave the way they do.
I23	In the long run the people are responsible for bad government on a national as well as on a local level.

Note: The codes are the same ones used by Collins (1974), and refer to the original Rotter (1966) position of the item, not to its position in the present questionnaire.

Table 2

Internal-External Items, Factor Loadings,

Means and Standard Deviations

Item(a)	Easy World	Just World	Predictable World	Politically Responsive World	First extracted factor	M	SD
E20	.61	--(b)	--	--	-.55	4.32	1.69
E22	.59	--	--	--	-.54	3.94	1.68
E4	.55	--	--	--	-.38	3.53	1.52
E19	.54	--	--	--	-.29	4.07	1.62
E8	.53	--	--	--	-.43	3.59	1.80
E3	.52	--	--	--	-.51	4.51	1.63
E12* (c)	.50	--	--	--	-.52	2.74	1.60
E5	.44	--	--	--	-.33	3.18	1.69
E13	.42	--	--	--	-.39	3.73	1.60
E16*	.39	--	--	--	-.32	3.71	1.83
I21	--	.55	--	--	.25	3.59	1.67
I16*	--	.53	--	--	.16	4.26	1.90
I6	--	.51	--	--	.13	4.16	1.68
I5	--	.47	--	--	.27	4.24	1.71
I1	--	.46	--	--	.15	4.32	1.36
I8	--	.45	--	--	.22	3.55	1.88
E17	--	.42	--	--	.15	5.00	1.66
I3	--	.39	--	--	.20	4.23	1.77

Table 2 (Cont'd)

Item	Easy World	Just World	Predictable World	Politically Responsive World	First extracted factor	M	SD
I22	--	.37	--	--	.32	5.07	1.48
I15	--	--	.74	--	.40	3.35	1.72
I20	--	--	.74	--	.57	3.98	1.60
I9	--	--	.69	--	.55	4.59	1.61
E1	--	--	-.67	--	-.34	3.70	1.86
I12	--	--	.61	--	.52	4.87	1.50
I13	--	--	.56	--	.51	4.85	1.41
E11*	--	--	-.53	--	-.51	3.57	1.56
I7	--	--	.38	--	.37	5.11	1.70
I10	--	--	--	.74	.50	4.82	1.60
E18	--	--	--	-.67	-.47	3.87	1.78
E10	--	--	--	-.66	-.49	3.86	1.82
I14	--	--	--	.63	.36	4.84	1.45
I23	--	--	--	.55	.46	4.87	1.47
I18	--	--	--	.51	.39	4.03	1.73
I2	--	--	--	.45	.26	3.17	1.70
E2*	--	--	--	-.37	-.21	4.70	1.80
E14*	.38	--	--	-.59	-.56	4.08	1.72
E15*	.43	--	-.40	--	-.50	3.91	1.50
E6	.27	-.09	-.03	.01	-.20	5.65	1.52

Table 2 (Cont'd)

Item	Easy World	Just World	Predictable World	Politically Responsive World	First extracted factor	M	SD
E7*	.15	.26	-.29	-.12	-.24	4.84	1.49
E9*	.32	.03	-.29	-.01	-.35	4.72	1.48
E21	.16	.08	-.04	-.17	-.19	4.26	1.75
E23	.33	-.02	-.02	-.01	-.31	4.02	1.66
I4*	-.34	.30	-.01	-.19	.18	3.80	1.66
I11	-.34	.21	.04	.16	.38	5.59	1.13
I17*	-.00	.33	.11	.06	.18	4.55	1.75
I19*	-.24	.22	.02	.18	.30	6.09	1.17

N=206

Note: a) High (7) scores are assigned for agreeing with items. See Table 1 for individual item content.

b) Factor loadings less than ±0.35 have been omitted.

c) '*' designates items with revised positions from those described by Collins (1974).

Table 3

Internally Consistent Attitude Items with Discriminant Validity

CODE/KEY	CONTENT
ND1 (-)	We need to have a strong nuclear arsenal to insure our own security against other countries who possess nuclear weapons.
ND2 (-)	If it were up to me, I'd spend more money on a strong military including more advanced nuclear weapons.
ND3 (+)	I think that the defense budget is too high.
ND4 (+)	The reason why nuclear weapons are still around is that there has not been enough concentrated effort made by the people to eliminate them.
ID1 (+)	People who are considered legally insane cannot be held responsible for their actions and should be acquitted of their crimes.
ID2 (-)	The insanity defense is another loophole in our legal system that allows criminals to go free.
ID3 (-)	Just because a person was not in control of his actions doesn't mean he is not responsible for them.
ID4 (-)	A person should have to accept the consequences of his actions whether he is sane or not.

Note: On each scale a (+)-keyed item was scored so that strong agreement = 7; a (-)-keyed item was scored so that strong disagreement = 7.

Table 4

New Attitude Items, Factor Loadings,

Means, and Standard Deviations

Item(a)	Nuclear factor	Insanity factor	First extracted factor	M	SD	Part/Whole correlations
ND1	-.68	--(b)	-.13	3.70	1.93	.58***
ND2	-.83	--	-.13	5.33	1.62	.67***
ND3	+.77	--	+.01	4.54	2.04	.60***
ND4	+.52	--	+.17	4.15	1.92	.38***
ID1	--	+.80	+.18	2.50	1.68	.68***
ID2	--	-.77	-.17	2.53	1.62	.59***
ID3	--	-.68	-.15	2.22	1.55	.53***
ID4	--	-.80	-.15	2.58	1.61	.68***

*** $p<.001$

Note: a) Items are scored according to the key presented in Table 3.

b) Factor loadings less than ± 0.35 have been omitted.

Table 5

Interscalar Correlations and Internal Consistency

	Nuclear Disarmament Items	Insanity Defense Items	Political Unresponsiveness Subscale
Nuclear Items	.44**	.18	.05
Insanity Items		.41**	.13
Political Unresponsiveness Subscale			.31*

** p<.01

Table 6

Correlations between Politically-Unresponsive World Beliefs and "We need to have a strong nuclear arsenal to insure our own security against other countries who possess nuclear weapons" (ND1) among Subjects Categorized by Own Initial Position

Subject's Score on ND1	Political Unresponsiveness Subscale Score	
	Above mid-point	Below mid-point
Above Midpoint	-.51** (25) a	+.26* (56)
Below Midpoint	-.13 (55)	-.17 (62)

N=198(b)

** $p<.01$

* $p<.05$

Note:

a) Numbers in parentheses are all N on which correlations are based.

b) Subjects scoring exactly at the scalar midpoint (32) on the political unresponsiveness subscale are not included in the analysis.